



Last year's student protest brought thousands to the streets. Image courtesy of Canadian Federation of Students

## Access to information? Act.

by Derek Cassidy

The Access 2000 Day of Action is only a couple of weeks away, but many students don't seem to know just what they are taking action against.

In a random informal survey done at George Brown College, 23 students were asked what they knew about Access 2000. All of the students had heard of it, but none were quite sure what it was.

Each of the 23 students were asked if they knew what the whole thing was trying to accomplish. Responses ranged from "It's about getting better education" to "some kind of new government program." Even the students who were aware of Access 2000's efforts weren't sure exactly what it was all about.

"I know it's about getting better education and stuff, but I don't really know the details," said Jen Butler, a second-year graphics student.

Butler said she wants better education, but hasn't done anything to become involved in the effort. She said she might participate in a student walkout and would gladly sign a petition (although she hasn't), but she doesn't want to get involved on a daily basis. Her reason? She doesn't know how.

Her position was echoed by most of the students surveyed. They cared about education issues, but weren't actively involved with Access 2000 or any other advocacy group.

Jason, a first-year marketing student, said he is too busy to get involved.

"I just don't have the time, and I don't think there's much to be done anyway," he said. He is convinced the government

will not bow to the pressure of the students.

However, he admitted he had plenty of time to hang out with friends and play sports. Jason says he has thought about having to pay back his student loans, but it's not something he will worry about until the time comes. He also didn't know how or when his loans would come due.

The issue of the funding structure was also met with indifference.

Two of the students surveyed said they had never heard the term "funding structure" and seven others said it wasn't something the student should need to worry about. The rest deemed it "out of the student's control."

Each student was asked if they cared about better education: all said yes and all but one was not involved in doing anything about it.

Tammy Natenil, 22, says she has followed Access 2000's advocacy campaign and intends to participate in the day of action on February 2. She says it's unfortunate that many students are content to sit back and let their education system erode.

"It seems like everybody (complains) about paying back their loans, but they aren't upset enough to do anything about it," she said.

The students surveyed all said they would like to see student debt relieved, but had no ideas about how to accomplish it. They also didn't seem enthusiastic in regards to becoming actively involved with the cause. The general consensus was that change was needed, but no one wanted to initiate it.

## A mobile telephone primer

by Alda Kang

All right, I'll admit to owning a cell phone. I am not, however, constantly chatting away unable to be alone. I have it to relieve my parents extreme paranoia. And I do mean extreme. If they see anything on the evening news about rapists, murderers, or violent crimes in general, they will call my house ... just to say hi at 11:30p.m.

I use my cell phone for emergencies. Most of my friends don't even know the number. I am embarrassed to even have one. I hide in a corner and use it as inconspicuously as possible.

I'll admit, it comes in handy. You don't have to run around looking for a pay phone when it's -30°. With the convenience, though, there are some bad habits that are hard to avoid.

1. Driving while talking is a big no no. If someone calls you while driving it's okay to answer and say "I'm driving/busy right now. I'll call you back." It's not kosher to start a conversation. If not for your own safety, think of the safety of those around you. If you don't drink and drive don't talk and drive.

2. Have you ever been in a coffee shop lineup where the person in front of you holds up the entire line because they forgot to ask their significant other if they want milk or sugar? Irritating!

3. In my experience as a cashier I have had some inconsiderate

cell phone users. In the middle of ringing in their order, their cell phone goes off. Since there is no one else in line behind them, they go on to have a conversation while I wait and listen.

4. Imagine you're on a date and everything is going great. He/she has a cell phone and it goes off. You would automatically assume the person would turn it off or answer and explain they couldn't talk. But no, a conversation starts. Unless they see the look on your face and apologize profusely, you should let them pay for dinner and don't call them again. Of course, I'm all talk and no action.

5. Cell phones that go off during any kind of performance, show or movie. If you have a cell phone, you should make a conscious effort to remember to turn it off. There really is no excuse, unless you forget.

6. Taking calls while you are in class is just plain silly. How important could you be? It's extremely rude to interrupt an entire class for your own personal calls.

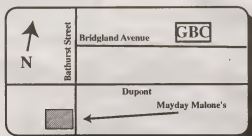
Now there are probably many people who have done one or two of the things listed here. And it's understandable. But cell phones should not be an excuse to be inconsiderate and rude. Cell phone users should make an conscious effort to be considerate. This new fad of technology and status should not interfere with the way we interact with others.



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# Debt of gratitude? I'm not sure yet.

by Karl Macknight

It seems that the bulk of this edition of *dialog* revolves around the student debt issue and the ever-tightening chokehold that getting an education has on the student population of Ontario. Given that I don't come from a student politics or activism background, I'm not particularly well versed in exactly what the issues are.

I do understand what it means to be a financially challenged student. That much is true. I do have attached to my name the kind of student debt you can only accumulate after most of a university degree and one year of community college (see if you can locate me on the WALL OF DEBT in Get Back Jack's).

I do not, however, worry that I'll never be able to pay it back. It may take me a few years, but I'm relatively employable and will always be able to find a job doing something. You wouldn't believe how much easier it is to find a job when you possess skills as diverse as the ability to make a wicked cappuccino or being able to properly identify and fix errors in someone's Ph.D. thesis.

I'm lucky, in a sense. I don't owe much money to the provincial or federal governments. I tried to get an Ontario student loan in my first year of university back in 1993 and was, in essence, refused. Apparently my parents made "too much money". I wish someone from OSAP could fill my mom and dad in on exactly which form the "made" money took. Maybe they thought we were actually printing our own money...

To make the story shorter, I ended up receiving \$316.50 (really), "just" enough money to pay for my first-year books (Yay, journalism school!). Thanks for almost nothing.

After that ordeal I reckoned it was better to dance with the devil and get a student line of credit from a "big bank".

Not only was the customer service superior (believe it or not), my future ability to repay the loan actually aided in the approval process. Cool. I received enough money to live comfortably through the school year — three years in a row.

The Bank of Montreal, incidentally, has managed to renew my faith in our country's unique financial institution structure. Unlike the student loan people I dealt with a few years ago, the bank took it as a matter of course that it cost money to go to school.

I decline to mention the name of the bank that handled my provincial loan all those years ago. Goodness knows a defamation suit is the last thing I need.

address where my father still lives today. (all for the paltry sum of \$316.50). It occurred to me to give them the names and addresses of people I knew were planning to default on loans of tens of thousands of dollars, but I decided not to project my anger.

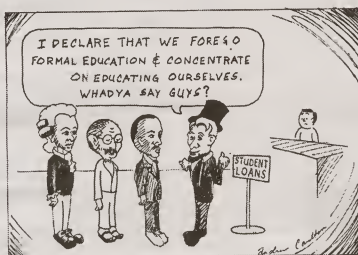
I guess the point of the whole Access 2000 thing is to eliminate the need for students to have to borrow money to go to school. I have my own opinions on this, some of which are controversial and unpopular in the present political climate.

Suffice it to say that I believe nothing comes for free; not even something we deserve as much as we deserve our education. Unfortunately we don't live in a virtual utopia like Sweden, where most of the people are educated, crime is low, tuition is free and living grants are available because the government believes that school is work.

Is that the sound of a mass exodus I hear? As a point of note for those of you packing your bags and checking the prices on flights to Stockholm, it's colder there than here and almost everybody is white. Did I mention that the income tax rates are actually higher than they are in Canada? There is certainly something to be said for our crappier, if not more cosmopolitan, Canadian way of life.

Whatever one may feel politically with respect to student debt and tuition, it remains true that if things continue the way that they are only the very rich will have access to higher education.

Intelligence has nothing to do with financial status. Some of the best artists and thinkers in history have come from unfortunate circumstances, including Mozart (who also died poor); Christopher Marlowe, who was a contemporary of Shakespeare's; Martin Luther King, Jr.; Abraham Lincoln; Gandhi - they probably didn't have student loans, but you get the picture...



I will tell you that I called in numerous address changes to each as I moved around the city, none of which they actually processed. I ended up receiving a notice from a collection agency about two years ago, complete with threats of all sorts of legal action.

It is interesting to note that not one letter was sent to the permanent address I had listed on my loan application, the

## How loud is the roar of the paper tiger?

by Allan Stokell

Most of you know that I am a mature student. Very mature. I came back to GBC after a number of careers, the last of which was not too successful. During the thirty years I've spent in the workforce, I've been saving money for my "golden years". RRSPs have allowed me to put away a few bucks every year for my retirement, and I've been saving since my late twenties.

Even with the proposed extension to the retirement age, I only have another fifteen years to save for two or three decades of retirement. Between my wife and I, we hope to have enough saved to keep the proverbial wolf from our door. We don't trust, as our parents did, that the government will look after us.

I only mention my retirement plans because I recently had a conversation with a twenty-something student. She is a reflection of many students. She is young, has chosen a career path and does well in her program. Like many GBC students, she took a few years of university before she focused her career goals. She owes just less than \$40,000 in student loans.

Imagine what you could do with 40K? You could buy a Mercedes (not recommended), put a down payment on a house or take a trip around the world. This

student doesn't have these kind of choices. She is still at least two years from graduation and if she gets a good job, she has at least ten years to work before she pays off her debt. By then she will be thirty-something, maybe even forty-something. She will not yet have begun saving for her retirement.

This student is not alone. Anyone who has walked into the Get Back Jack's retail operation will have seen the Wall of Debt. Hundreds of students owe many hundreds of thousands of dollars. Some will never be out of debt. They will carry this burden to their grave.

My son is nine years old. What choices for higher education will he have in another ten years? Can we expect a \$50,000 debt sentence to be the norm? Will this mean that only the children of the rich will receive a proper education? I don't see many rich kids here at the college. What will that mean to The City College? Will schools that specialize in providing quality education to the

proletariat disappear?

The Canadian Federation of Students (CFS) is asking us to vote on a referendum concerning Access 2000. The CFS has other concerns — the quality of the labs in your school, overcrowded classrooms, high ancillary fees and others. The Student Association will be asking full-time students, through a referendum, to support a student walk-out. The walk-out will protest lack of government action on these important issues.

The vote will take place on January 25-26, 2000. If approved, we will join thousands of other students across Canada in a one-day strike. On February 2, there will be informational pickets set up around the college, then we will march to Ryerson to meet with other students and together we will go to Queen's Park to confront the government.

For us here at George Brown that will mean a day away from classes and a chance to meet with other students in a rally. Many instructors here at the College support our aims. The association that

represents them has voted in support of the students' goals. The CFS reps at George Brown assure us there will be no academic penalty for attending these protests.

In the 1960s, I carried a little red book with me. It was quotes from Mao Zedong, leader of the Chinese Revolution. The book credited him for many inspirations including "A journey of a thousand miles begins with a single footstep." Mao knew the value of power. He also knew which groups would back down in the face of adversity. He called those people "Paper Tigers." They looked strong and tough, but they would capitulate when challenged.

Canada is one of only two countries in the world whose governments do not financially assist students. Other much poorer countries recognize the value of a good education. We must force our representatives to recognize that Canadian students demand an affordable, quality education.

One last thing. We tend not to participate in demonstrations. We don't protest. Government sees this as silent acquiescence to their policies. They call that the Silent Majority. We need to show them we are the Loud Majority. If I don't see you out on February 2, I'll know you are a paper tiger.





# Companies battle on the web for student dollars

by Mason Wright, CUP BC Bureau Chief

**BURNABY, BC (CUP)** — Back in the early 1990s, post-secondary students were one of the first groups in society to embrace the Internet as a powerful tool for communication and information.

Now, with the help of web-based companies like CollegeClub and ProfessorJones, they are among the first to create meaningful online communities.

"Everybody needs to have a forum where they can express themselves," said Thomas Mallen, a University of Guelph student reached via CollegeClub's instant messaging system. Online, he explained, "students can interact and talk about issues in their lives."

But the draw of student Internet portals and websites goes well beyond simple chat sessions with other students. While student-led discussion groups and electronic bulletin boards are a mainstay on many sites, other features can include news content, discount textbook sales, free email, information about colleges and universities, job search tips and student art galleries.

Some sites try to cover the whole range of services, while others are more specialized.

But while the Internet represents vast access to information for Canadian students, for many companies it's a lucrative way to reach the highly sought-after 18- to 24-year-old demographic. And despite the infancy of Internet technologies the industry is already very competitive.

One Internet portal that has captured the attention of post-secondary students is CollegeClub, arguably the industry leader in the United States. The site — [www.collegeclub.com](http://www.collegeclub.com) — allows members to interact with each other through discussion groups, chat groups and instant messaging.

While this means most of the site's content is member driven, CollegeClub also features news content, a range of online shopping options and other services built with students in mind.

In Canada, meanwhile, several companies are fighting it out in cyberspace.

ProfessorJones, an Ottawa-based site targeted specifically at Canadians, was soft-launched — or released on a trial basis — in 1997 as an online textbook store called TextExpress.

The original success of TextExpress in its home province of Ontario led president and founder Alex de Bold to launch it nationally in September 1999 as ProfessorJones.

— [www.professorjones.com](http://www.professorjones.com) — a more

complete student portal, featuring academic resources and online collaboration tools for students.

This month, de Bold is doing a new launch in response to the feedback he received from the estimated 30,000 users his site entertains each month.

"The website now customizes itself based on what campus you go to," said the 25-year-old University of Ottawa graduate. "It'll give you links to your campus, like your financial aid centre or your student newspaper."

Another group entering the student portal game is the campus press. This past September, Campus News — [www.campusnews.cup.ca](http://www.campusnews.cup.ca) — was soft-launched by Canadian University Press (CUP), a national co-operative of 72 student newspapers.

It quickly attained as many as 55,000 impressions, or page loads, per month.

The site's main feature is its news content, which is assembled from the member newspapers and updated every weekday.

Tariq Hassan-Gordon, president of CUP, says the organization has always wanted to produce a publication for a national student audience. The Internet finally gave it the opportunity to prove that it can be relied on for national student news.

Finally, Montreal-based uPath is planning a hard launch — or full release — complete with aggressive promotions and all the site's features and services this month.

Like other portals, uPath talks a lot about creating an online community and encouraging user input into the site. But it also serves up a full slate of magazine-style content and provides a wider variety of services than most Canadian portals.

The uPath site — [www.upath.com](http://www.upath.com) — was soft-launched in the fall to a handful of large Canadian campuses, and company president Adam Starr says the company used feedback from students who experienced the site to foster improvements.

Many of these sites are part of a noticeable trend in the industry — feeling out the market in fall 1999, and then proceeding with either a hard launch or a return to the drawing board to tinker with the online product.

"I think that when we began this journey almost a year ago," said uPath's Starr, "we realized that Fall '99 was going to be the season that you were going to see this influx of online properties catering toward university and college students."

As for why that is, Starr doesn't have much of an explanation, while de Bold of ProfessorJones says it just took this long to be able to acquire the resources for a

national launch of his product.

But Rick Broadhead, and Internet consultant and co-author of Canadian Internet Handbook 2000, offers one possible explanation.

"When I think of everything that I've been exposed to over the last five years," he said, "nothing comes close to the Internet's ability to pull together people with like interests."

And in this country, say the heads of Canada's student sites, one thing that draws young people together is the desire for services and content that cater to Canadian students. "Canadians are looking for Canadian online experiences," said Starr.

While sites like CollegeClub and Mybytes, another popular American portal, allow Canadian students to interact with one another, they lack news or academic information about Canada.

"I really can't see the value of what a U.S. company can give to a Canadian student," said de Bold.

But Mallen, the CollegeClub member, says the community of Canadian students on the site provides enough value for many.

"There are a lot of Canadians on here, and Canadians don't care about whether a product is Canadian made or not," he said. "There are Canadian clubs on here if you want a piece of Canadiana."

Yet CUP President Hassan-Gordon recognizes the advantage American sites can have with their massive communities of students.

"To some degree American sites can be very successful because all they have to do is repackage their core programs and systems and then put a little Canadian spin on it," he said. "Generating Canadian content isn't so important for [all portals] because the Canadian content comes from the participants."

Still, American and Canadian portals alike need to draw students in and hold their attention in this competitive market.

One of the most effective hooks is a give away or contest. ProfessorJones, for example, required users to sign up for the site before they could enter a free tuition contest in the fall, while little-known American portal CampusStation is promoting its \$10,000 open scholarship to students in places like Ottawa.

Meanwhile, uPath's current hook is free, unlimited Internet access.

"If [students] are paying for it right now, it's something that will draw them to us," explained Starr. "Once they become used to our product, I think you're going to see a loyal base to uPath.com."

According to Hassan-Gordon, Starr's philosophy seems to work. CUP is

currently running a national hockey pool through the Campus News site, and it has generated continued traffic that has exceeded the organization's expectations.

"It hasn't been heavily promoted, but we've still sustained a number of impressions [visits] that I think shows the potential," he said.

But other gimmicks seem to leave a bit of a bad taste in users' mouths. One of CollegeClub's recent ideas was to hire a team of students to roam campuses, take pictures of other students with a digital camera, and point them to the site where the photos would be posted.

"They told us it would be here," said Carolyn Weiss, a 24-year-old Carleton University student. "It wasn't, but hey, I had to join to find that out."

The most popular promotional hook, however, is still advertising, and in the student Internet portal industry companies have gone well beyond traditional poster campaigns and newspaper ads.

At first, more established portals like CollegeClub and ProfessorJones found that creating a presence on campuses with posters and handout offers was the way to go. But not everyone appreciated that technique, says de Bold.

"I know that some people have commented that the amount of stuff that we distributed was too much this past fall," he said. In response, ProfessorJones is looking for more creative ways to get the word out.

In December, ProfessorJones bought ReSource, a student lifestyle magazine that distributes on campuses all over Canada. de Bold says the plan is to rename the magazine ProfessorJones and re-launch it later this month.

According to Internet analyst Broadhead it's a smart move.

"They've got a toehold in the offline market now," he said. "They've got a traditional marketing vehicle to use to direct traffic to their online site, and I'm sure they'll reinforce each other."

Another site that has its own ideas about advertising is uPath. With "Team uPath," the company has employed students at 15-20 campuses who are expected to raise the profile of the portal by cultivating relationships with groups like campus bars and student bands.

"We provide collateral to those venues," explained Starr, "and in return they post up our banners in their bars during particular events and during their concerts." The relationship extends to the site, where bands are profiled in the "Sound Lounge" section.

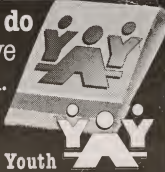
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## Education not necessarily a social program, says Minister

by Chris Bodnar, CUP Ottawa Bureau Chief

OTTAWA (CUP) — Jane Stewart, federal minister of Human Resources and Development, says her government recognizes the importance of a strong post-secondary education system in Canada, even though it may not be seen as a social program anymore. In an exclusive interview with Canadian University Press, Stewart outlined what she views as her government's accomplishments in the realm of higher education.

But she avoided commenting on whether Canadians can count on their education system to get the same attention as other social programs.

"Education is certainly viewed as an important piece of a healthy Canada," said Stewart in regard to her government's view of spending on post-secondary education. The Minister says Ottawa has shown its commitment to education through initiatives like the use of Registered Education Savings Programs, the Millennium Scholarship Fund, making interest on student loans tax deductible and by extending loan repayment periods.

"I think when you look at the numbers of students supported by Canada student loans, I think what we're finding is that we do have to have strong partnerships at all levels of government and with individual citizens to ensure that we create a tradition of life-long learning in Canada," she said.

But Stewart also maintains there is a greater need for corporate involvement in Canada's education system. "In the new economy all jobs are knowledge-based jobs," said Stewart. "I think that what we're finding is that we need partnerships." "We've set out in the Speech from the Throne the priorities we feel we're in a position to undertake," she continued. "I'm glad to see they include a focus on our children, and in the longer term a focus on skills and a strategy that includes all partners."

But despite Stewart's insistence that the Liberals are looking towards "partnerships" with the provinces, the government has come under repeated attack from some provincial governments for meddling in provincial affairs. In November, the provincial finance ministers called on the federal government to increase transfer payments to the provinces for education by \$3.7-billion a year.

Transfer payments to the provinces for post-secondary education and training have been cut by \$7-billion since the Liberals took office in 1993. Stewart herself had to step in to mediate negotiations between the Millennium Scholarship Foundation and

the government of Quebec, after the province accused Ottawa of trying to control education through the scholarship program.

Education is designated as a provincial jurisdiction in Canada's constitution. And while Stewart says her government has no intention of taking control of education away from the provinces, government documents indicate the Liberals recognized the provinces' dissatisfaction with educational funding. In documents obtained from the Privy Council Office under an Access to Information request, speaking notes for the Prime Minister warned that there would be opposition to the Millennium Scholarship Fund's creation.

"Provinces see themselves as key stakeholders, as education is a provincial jurisdiction, and they may seek a role in designing the Fund and/or the scholarships," say the documents from late 1997 and early 1998. "Further, to date, both Quebec and Alberta have indicated that their share of the funds should be transferred to them."

The documents indicate the Millennium Fund would serve to "complement" existing provincial programs, not to replace them.

Other documents show a greater concern on behalf of the federal government to monitor the political commentary from Quebec regarding national unity, rather than working out details on how the Foundation would allocate money or be structured.

Despite early indications that the Millennium Fund would be in addition to existing programs, Ottawa has had to reconsider these earlier statements.

It is now allowing some provincial governments to reduce current student aid programs, resulting in substantial savings in the areas of education spending.

The Ontario government estimates savings of up to \$90-million after replacing part of a loan-forgiveness program with the new federal scholar-ships.

But despite differences between the federal and provincial governments, Stewart says the Liberals are committed to ensuring good relations between all levels of government.

"There are a large number of federal programs in the area of education and by in large they're well-received," she said. "They're strong partnerships between the government of Canada and other leaders in their particular domains, and focused on providing leadership and contribution in areas the government of Canada feels are important."

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Happy New Year from yours truly, He and She! We hope your holidays were jolly and bright. Now that we have all the niceties out of the way, we can focus on the real issue at hand ... MOVIES! Since He and I have not really had quality time together in a while, we decided to write separate reviews this time 'round. These are the best the year 2000 has to offer (at this point in time, that's not saying much).

### Girl Interrupted

Stars: Winona Ryder, Angelina Jolie, and Whoopi Goldberg

She said: I watched this movie with two close girlfriends last weekend. Sunday was our bonding day in which we shopped and ate and walked around Queen Street. You know the drill, ladies. We decided to skip the ROM in favour of "Girl Interrupted". Since I haven't had a good cry-fest in a while, I was wholeheartedly in favour of this change in venue. However, the movie was not quite what I expected. And in some ways, it was more.

This movie is based on the real life story of Susanna Kaysen (Winona Ryder), a young woman who checks herself into a mental hospital for a "short stay" and winds up spending over a year of her life coping with depression and a borderline personality disorder. While in the hospital, Kaysen befriends a fellow inmate Lisa (played fabulously by Angelina Jolie) and soon discovers she must choose between complacency and recovery. I won't give it away by telling you which she chooses. That would be wrong. But let me say this, with a strong woman such as Whoopi Goldberg playing the part of the hospital nurse, you can almost imagine the outcome.

In any case, my afternoon with the girls was not wasted. I didn't cry (which was

disappointing because I almost always do) but I did get to see my boyfriend again (Jared Leto ... he was in the movie). And that made it worth the money!

Grade: B+

### Galaxy Quest

Stars: Sigourney Weaver, Tim Allen

He said: Okay, SO!... I loved this movie...now, hear me out! I know it appears to be an even more outrageously dumb version of Starship Troopers with a Leslie Nielsen twist. But no, it's not. It's an inventive, creative and whimsically smart film about a little band of actors who play characters on a Star Trek-esque T.V. show. They are mistaken for "real" space heroes and are whisked away to defeat a big bad alien bully, all the while delivering some of the funniest physical comedy seen in film recently.

The premise is, of course, absurd! But that doesn't stop this film from becoming a non-stop giggle fest. Yes, I said giggle fest! There are so many charming and sharp-witted pieces embedded within the entire structure of Galaxy Quest that you find yourself in somewhat of a steady laughing fit.

The acting is top notch, but I did have some curiosity with respect to the sobriety of Tony Shaloub's character. Was it perpetual munchies or something else? Just a curiosity. Tim Allen was at his best providing his finest James T. Kirk impression. But I believe the true screen-stealing credits belong to a very disgruntled Alan Rickman and "Guy", the guy who gets killed off in the beginning only to survive until the end, sometimes credited as guy #2, 3 or 4. But always a part of the Away Team, and always the surefire one of the bunch to buy the farm by the trusty laser gun that's set on kill. Oh the horror!

All in all, Galaxy Quest serves up a fine banquet of good times. And if you can get past the startling piece of the female alien's translation of her name, you've either got it made, or you've got some ear damage!

Grade: A

Make sure you check us out next issue when He and She discuss their picks for the Golden Globes.

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## Exercise your right to affect change

by Kenney Fitzpatrick

We're all getting screwed. I'm in debt, you're in debt, students are in debt. When I started my education, tuition was about \$1,700 (in 1988, which makes me a bit older, I guess). Now it's around \$3,400. I owe \$27,000 for four years of education, and I'm betting all of you could end up owing more.

Governments over the last decade have looked to students to make up their funding shortfalls. The idea is that they can cut funding and we'll cough up the difference. This results in students graduating from college and university with massive debt-loads. It also means that many people from lower-income backgrounds won't be able to go to school at all.

Should education just be available to those who can afford huge tuition fees? Should students finish their college or university education owing tens of thousands of dollars?

Studies have shown that when you increase tuition, you make it more difficult for people to go to school. During the first three years that British Columbia froze their tuition fees, enrollment went up by 6.4%; in the rest of the country it went down by 2.6%.

Students at George Brown College have the opportunity to vote in a campus-wide referendum about this issue. The question is: "Do you support a one-day strike on February 2, calling for increased post-secondary education funding, a national grants system, and a freeze and reduction of tuition fees?"

This referendum is being held to rally George Brown student support for better education funding in Canada. Voting will be held on January 24, 25, and 26. Make sure you take the time to register your support for the campaign to improve students' lives! That means you, so vote!

by Todd Corvetti

Being a part of the Access 2000 campaign since September of 1999 — and with the February 2 student strike fast approaching — I've decided to take a moment and reflect on what Access 2000 means to me.

When asked what Access 2000 is I always give my well-used and to-the-point definition: Access 2000 is the campaign of the Canadian Federation of Students to heighten pressure on the federal and provincial decision-makers to implement crucial measures for affordable, quality education.

I can't guarantee that the February 2 student strike will bring a victory over the government. However, what I have seen over the past four months and my predictions for the weeks to come constitute a victory in my eyes. I've seen over 60 colleges and universities unite;

## Repayment riddle solved using math, OSAP info

by Angela LaRocque

The intention of this article is to bring rising student debt to the forefront of people's minds. As the Student Association of GBC and Canadian Federation of Students embark upon a campaign (Access 2000) with just such a theme, it is imperative that we students take an active role.

The following is a profile of one nursing student's experience with debt. Tyrone is a 23-year-old unmarried student with no dependents. He carries a debt load of \$38,000 and has yet to complete his education. He intends to obtain his degree in Nursing. Tyrone neither owns a house nor does he possess any real assets, such as a car. He does not stand a good chance of gaining any in the near future either. As a graduating nurse with no experience he will earn about \$37,440 in gross income (before taxes) a year. That is if a full-time position can be obtained upon graduation in April.

From the day he graduates, OSAP loans begin to accrue interest at a optimistic interest rate of 4.4% compounded monthly (he will not have to make any payments until the 1st day of the 7th month after graduation).

The OSAP website was consulted to explore repayment options. The site profiled various opportunities to resolve or lower his debt through forgiveness, or scholarships, etc. Unfortunately this student did not qualify for most of the benefits, and those he did qualify for failed to significantly reduce his debt.

The following repayment figures are educated estimates obtained from data on the OSAP website and a calculator, not a bank.

### Repayment over 5 years      Repayment over 15 years

Loan	Total	Minimum	Gross	Loan	Total	Minimum	Gross
Value	Amount	Monthly	Income	Value	Amount	Monthly	Income
	Repaid	Payment	Needed		Repaid	Payment	Needed
38,000	47,332	788	63,109	38,000	73,434	408	32,640

Over 60 months (5 years) the minimum monthly payment is 788 dollars. The minimum monthly payment is 15% of his gross monthly income. In this case, Tyrone would have to make an annual gross income of \$63,109 in order to pay the \$9,332 dollars of interest on his loans over 5 years. Unfortunately, even when he eventually reaches the top of the pay scale he will only earn \$58,240 in gross income. By contrast, the interest over 15 years is \$35,434. The 15-year schedule is the only repayment option open to Tyrone to repay his debts.

Financial planners suggest that one must begin to save by age 21 in order to enjoy a comfortable retirement. With this in mind, Tyrone's financial outlook is not bright.

This is just one story of student debt. It is very discouraging for students to start or continue their post-secondary education with the prospect of accumulating a tremendous amount of debt. It is especially perplexing because the government signed an international treaty in 1976 which committed Canada to gradually eliminate user fees for post-secondary education. If the present state of educational costs is an indication of where things are headed, the government has demonstrated that they are not going to adhere to their promise to eliminate tuition costs. On February 2, 2000, there will be a student walk out and demonstration at Queen's Park. We as a society stand to lose a lot more than an education if post secondary education becomes inaccessible because of multiplying tuition costs.

"In the last decade, the federal Liberal government took \$7 billion from your education. On February 2, make them give it back!"

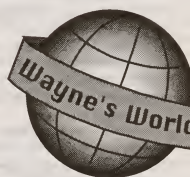
## Come for the cause, stay for the fun!

Campaign.

On February 2 at 11:00 a.m., students from GBC will gather in the student lounges at St. James and Casa Loma (Nightingale TBA) for pre-rally fun then head over to Ryerson to launch the demonstration and march. The rally will end up at the Phoenix, where the cover charge and bands have been already paid for by participating schools. The bands are King Cobb Steelie, La Bamba & the Latino All-Stars and Maestro (Fresh Wes). There is no question the day will be entertaining and exciting from start to finish.

On February 2 you are not only fighting for a victory over the government and your right to affordable, quality education. By taking a stand and coming out to the student strike, you'll be apart of a victory that's well under way.

JOIN THE CAMPAIGN



by Wayne Poirier

Why should you participate in Access 2000 student strike on Feb 2? This issue is very near and dear to my heart, and that is why I'm personally appealing to all of you to make this the largest student protest in Canadian history. I have \$25,000 student loans; I have fought collection agents when I didn't enough to pay the minimum payment and I have nieces and nephews who may not be able to afford a secondary education because their parents aren't wealthy enough. I know you are in the same position that is why we need to unite together.

The government's record on secondary education is appalling. Canada is only one of the industrialized countries that does not have a national system of grants (other being Japan). As a result, Canadian students have among the highest debt loads of any country, averaging over \$25,000 per student. Tuition fees in most Canadian provinces have increased by 150% in the last ten years and



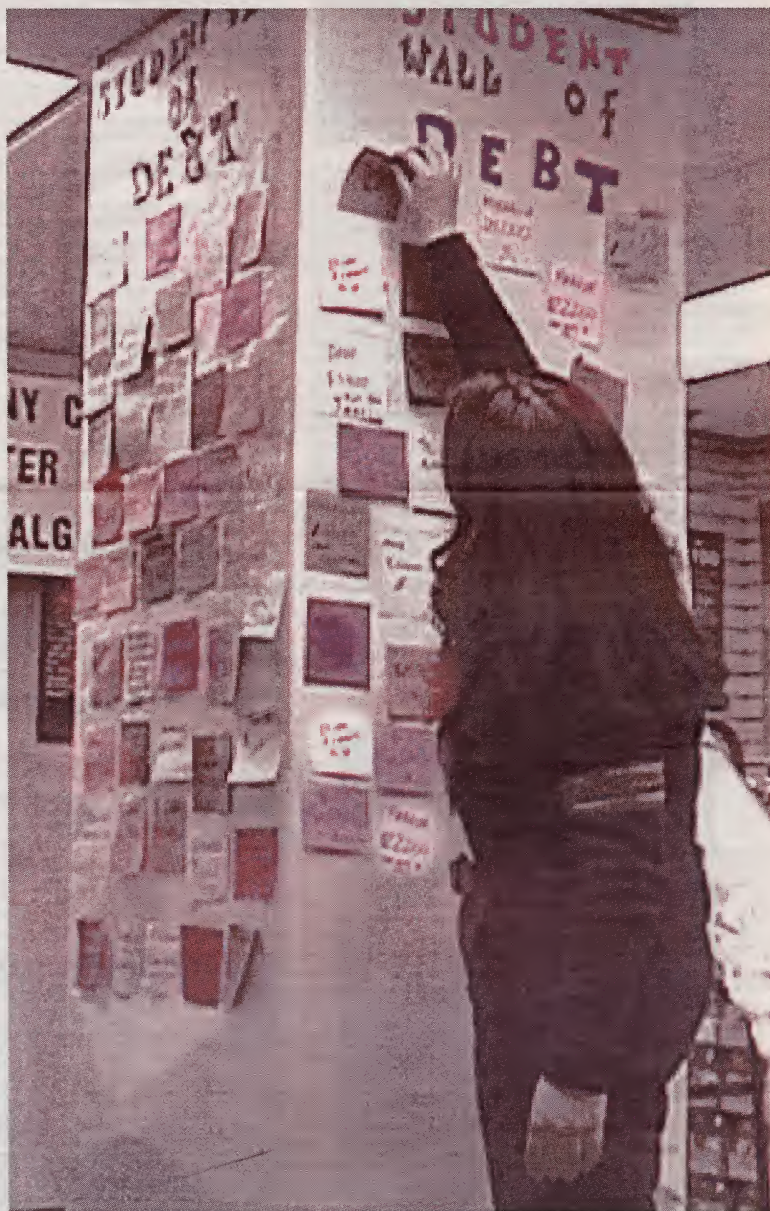


# Please Mike, may I have some more?

programs have seen increases of more than 400%. To add insult to injury, OSAP has been eroded at the very time that it is most needed. Meanwhile, the Ontario Minister of Education, Dianne Cunningham, had the audacity to state: "Never in the history of Ontario has post-secondary education been more accessible."

So why doesn't the government provide more funding? The answer is simply that they choose not to. The federal government is now in a surplus position and could easily alleviate some of the crisis. The Ontario government has chosen to cut services for the poor while giving tax breaks to the rich rather than stabilizing funding like other provinces have. Meanwhile, corporations in Canada continue to enjoy tax loopholes in which billions of dollars of corporate wealth has gone untaxed and record profits have been made on the backs of students and other vulnerable segments of our community. The government feels more obligated to these corporations than they do to you and me.

So let's get off our asses and make sure our voices are heard! Maybe nothing will change, but at least you will feel the strength of thousands of students raising their voices in solidarity for what is right. Or just maybe the government will feel so much pressure that they will actually be forced to increase funding and deal with our concerns. The student movement has had many successes both in Canada and internationally. February 2, 2000 is an opportunity to make history. I for one will make sure my voice is heard, and I hope you join me!



Another student adds her name to the Wall of Debt in Get Back Jack's. Image by Allan Stokell





Looking up to King Mátyás in the Castle District.

## What to see and how to get around The Best of Budapest

No visit to Hungary is complete without viewing the Hungarian crown, permanently installed in the House of Parliament as of New Year's Day. The Parliament itself is an impressive structure, even more so since the massive Communist era star was removed from the rotunda a few years ago. The adjacent district (Kálvin tér stop on the blue metro) is crammed with cafés and pubs, along with a number of statues and points of interest.

The Castle District can be reached from Moszkva tér via the Várbusz. In addition to the Buda Castle, visitors can see the Mátyás templom (Matthias Church), ride the funicular, survey the city panorama from the Halászbástya (Fishermen's Bastion), and explore the kilometres of catacombs under the district streets. A World War II surgical facility was discovered in the catacombs, fully equipped and still sterile. As well, the subways in Budapest are among the deepest in the world (the steep escalator ride down to Moszkva tér takes two minutes) and contain shelter for over 300,000 people in the event of nuclear war.

In the fifth district you'll find the most touristy area in the city. Known as the Belváros, this quarter contains high-end boutiques, numerous banks, overpriced folk art shops and a well-maintained walking street, the Váci utca. A word to the wise: if you are on a shoestring, do not buy anything except postcards and stamps in this neighbourhood. You can save a lot of money by purchasing your Hungarian wine, sausage, paprika and other gastronomy in the grocery stores of any other district.

Knowledge of Hungarian is not necessary for a visit to Budapest, particularly if you plan to stick to the more tourist-friendly locales. Most people working in the hospitality industry speak at least one other language, usually English, German or French (sometimes Russian). A Hungarian phrase book will prove useful if you plan to visit areas outside the capital or if you really want to experience Budapest to the fullest. The pronunciation is tricky but non-English-speaking Hungarians are incredibly patient with foreigners who take the time to try.



View through archway of the Halászbástya, or Fishermen's Bastion.

# Budapest offers the perfect combination of old and new

Add the Hungarian capital to your list of must-sees

Story and images by Kari Macknight

Form an image in your mind of Hungary, if you can. If you're like many people you're drawing a blank. We can all see London, Paris, Venice and New York City inside our heads. We see images of them everywhere.

If you're keen to know the secret Europeans are keeping to themselves, get thee to Budapest, the capital city of Hungary and my favourite place in the world.

With a population of just over two million, Budapest lies on both sides of the Danube, downriver from its more pristine sister, Vienna. As nuclei of the Austro-Hungarian Empire under the Habsburgs, these cities share a fascinating and turbulent past.

From 1956 to 1991 Hungary was under Communist control. The signs are visible in the mortar shell holes in many older

buildings and in the almost fanatical devotion of the young to Western culture.

What makes Budapest a rewarding stop is the richness of Hungarian history. With the oldest crown jewels in Europe (they celebrated their millennial birthday in 1999) and some of the best preserved Roman ruins anywhere, Hungary is its own Modern Western Civilization class.

Since the retreat of the Communists Hungary has made great strides in its effort to catch up to its neighbours. As a new member of NATO and a soon-to-be member of the European Community, the changes the country has gone through have been remarkably seamless.

It remains to be seen how the nation's transformation has improved the life of the average citizen, though, it has been said that Budapest will soon replace Dublin as the new Silicon Valley in Europe. Start learning Hungarian now!



Budapest panorama from the Citadella including the Lánchíd (Chain Bridge), Margithid (Margaret Bridge) and the Parliament.

Everyone has their opinion on what makes a good place to eat. For North Americans, however, dining out in Budapest is a bargain no matter where you end up. With the Canadian dollar at about 160 Hungarian forints (HUF), a pint of premium Hungarian or Austrian beer is usually less than \$3.

My recommendation for best pub would have to be the Fregatt (Fifth District, Molnár u. 26). Designed to feel like the inside of a ship, the Fregatt is the favourite meeting place of expatriates, mostly American, Canadian and British. English is spoken here. A friend of mine always gets the steak tartar, HUF 1000. A pint of Guinness is HUF 600.

Around the corner at Váci u. 67 is Fata! (Hungarian for wooden plate) Restaurant. A dinner for two with wine, coffee and more food than you can possibly eat will cost (with tip) about HUF 5000. Lots to choose from, even for vegetarians.



View across the Danube from Pest to the Buda Castle.







## Student websites poised to be profitable

### FROM COMPANIES BATTLE ON PAGE 4

But not all sites have promotional strategies as creative as these.

CampusNews, for example, has a tight budget, so it's tried to make use of the resources at its disposal.

"CUP is in an ideal situation, in partnership with its members, to promote a website at a very low cost," said Hassan-Gordon. Since their own content gets exposure on the site, CUP's member papers have incentive to run ads for it in their publications, with the added benefit being increased ad revenue for the organization as Campus News gains popularity.

"And the great thing about it is it's a revenue stream for CUP, so we can just reinvest the money [from banner ads] into developing the site," Hassan-Gordon adds.

Because it is owned by student newspapers and doesn't have to spend as much on marketing, says Hassan-Gordon,

CampusNews won't be sold to non-students like some of the other "fly-by-night" portals that put more money into marketing than content and services.

"I think the model right now is that if you invest a lot of money in marketing, and then you drive traffic to your site, then you can turn around and sell it to another company," he said.

But ProfessorJones' de Bold denies that he's in it for a quick buck.

"I'm not one of those people who's out there to create this monolith of a company so I can sell to an American tomorrow," he says.

ProfessorJones is a private company

funded by individual investors from across Canada, but de Bold insists that e wants to make sure everyone wins if ProfessorJones is successful: students, institutions and the company alike.

Likewise, uPath is a private company. Interestingly, it has a board of advisors that includes Starr's father Howard, president and CEO of Tommy Hilfinger Canada.

In terms of investors, Adam Starr will only say that they are currently "lobbying between three different deals," and that uPath won't be put in "any situation where a brand or an industry will be dictating what we do."

Assuming student Internet portals are more than just another online fad, what does the future hold? Will one portal emerge as the dominant online home for Canadian students or is there room for a number of these sites in Canada?

"I think that students will be the ones who make that decision," said de Bold, "not the companies."

For his part, uPath's Starr believes co-operation between student portals and other Internet-based companies is already evident, and that the future where "your entire school experience can be done online," is not that far away.

For now, though, the race for the attention of students is on, and Broadhead says that students have a lot to gain, now and in the future.

"I wish a service like this had been available when I was doing my degrees at York," he said. "I think the potential is just limitless."

## University of Ottawa professor under investigation for controversial exam question

by Kate Heartfield

Source: The Fulcrum (University of Ottawa)

OTTAWA (CUP) — A University of Ottawa microbiology professor is under investigation after he asked students how they would develop a bacterium to kill Quebec separatists, but not federalists.

Robert Charlebois included the bonus question in his third-year microbiology exam in December.

Following a media uproar, Charlebois sent each student a letter of apology saying he never meant to offend.

The University has issued a strongly worded statement characterizing the question as containing "bio-terrorism," and calling it "deplorable" and "clearly inappropriate." It apologized to anyone who might have been offended by the question.

It was also pointed out in the statement

that the University's relationship with its professors is governed by a collective agreement and that an investigation was underway according to the processes set out in that agreement.

According to the statement, Charlebois — who did not return phone calls — has been asked by science Dean Christian Dettellier to provide an explanation of his actions.

Neither Helene Carty, Marketing and Communications director, nor Lyse Huot, Marketing and Communications officer, could be contacted by press time. Carty and Huot were the ones who released the official University statement.

The controversial question read: "It is the year 2000 and you are employed by the government. Using your knowledge of microbiology and transmission of infections, find a bacterium to eliminate Quebecois separatists, but not federalists."

**You've got a date with your student debt on February 2nd at Queen's Park**

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We hope to see you soon!



# Horoscopes

by Jodi Shannahan

**Aries** (March 20 - April 19)

This is the month your success will be booming! So, go get that good grade or job you have been wanting. Trust your intuition when someone gives you that bad vibe. Could it be that someone is jealous of your charm and style? Hey, play it like the Kool Kat you are! They'll love it! You might have some extra cash from your holiday, but don't spend it at once, because a time will come when you are in need.

**Taurus** (April 20 - May 20)

Are you trying to stick to those impossible New Year's resolutions or goals? Relax ... take it one by one! An appealing and quirky character is going to become a part of your life ... could be interesting! Turn up that dial! Enjoy the music because this millennium is dancing for you!

**Gemini** (May 21 - June 20)

Does your pants have a hole in the pocket from all the holiday spending? Take this time to rediscover YOU! Go workout or enjoy a nice face mask! Fortune is coming your way. Proceed with caution tell your friends... you may be little cranky during your dry spell! After the well is dry it will be REALLY good once the rain comes!

**Cancer** (June 21 - July 22)

Why is everyone always picking on you? Do you find this year so far that no one will leave you alone? Fools rushing in. Be careful with the new love of yours, they are not as head over heels as you. Extra pocket money is coming your way, just take the chance. Maybe you can splurge for that something special you've had your eye on.

**Leo** (July 23 - August 22)

Are you feeling in the dumps after the holidays? Keep your chin up, excitement will knock at your door VERY SOON! Maybe it is time to try the new interest. Yoga or Playstation anyone? Who is that dark stranger creeping around in your shadow? Listen to others' ideas and criticism; you may learn a valuable lesson. Can you say Money, Honey? It's coming!

**Virgo** (August 23 - September 22)

You're feeling compassionate this week. Meeting a new friend is in the cards. Be nice to the old wise man on the street corner, it will indeed pay off. Try to remember your dreams this week. Something significant may be present or you may feel a little déjà vu! Time to start paying that holiday debt. No dancing and partying this week! Try the Macarena at home in the mirror.

**Libra** (September 23 - October 22)

Wondering what to do during these quiet weeks ahead? Catch up with some old friends or family; there is a surprise in store. Look in the mirror ... you're the love doctor! Do your friends think you provide the personals or the support group? Make sure your own emotions are not forgotten, you typical Libra helping others before yourself! Naughty, naughty you're up to something evil!

**Scorpio** (October 23 - November 21)

Uh oh! Are you in a bad mood since the New Year arrived? Nothing seems to be going your way right now. Harness that negative energy! Take charge of your weaknesses, Scorpio is a very strong and intense cookie. You can bounce back! Unexpected love interests are peeping in your windows. Enjoy a nice romantic evening. New opportunities are coming your way as well.

**Sagittarius** (November 22 - December 20)

By wearing a lot of blue this week, are you trying to tell us something? It's okay... you have a lot on your plate right now. There will be challenges to offset your sense of stability. You will find good fortune through the dark week. Just don't do anything too off the wall! Friends will think you're much out of character.

**Capricorn** (December 21 - January 19)

Hey... Its only the beginning of the term and you're back to being a workaholic already! If you keep on working like that you are never going to notice that person from afar that could be THE ONE! Be daring and adventurous, jump out of character! Make it a goal this year to do more things to please yourself. Be careful of how you give off your energy, it may give people the wrong impressions.

**Aquarius** (January 20 - February 18)

Do you have a lists of goals to accomplish this year already? Don't rush everything! Doing one task at a time has its playful rewards! Hint, Hint. The chance of meeting a cutie-patootie is on the rise! Be careful of a friend this week, there may be some tension. As always, you will see the good in that person. Celebrate who you are this week. Take yourself out on the town or rent an old favorite 80s flick.

**Pisces** (February 19 - March 19)

Did the holidays give you an extra boost? Feeling ready to take on an army of challenges? Try challenging the not-so-tasty impression someone left with you! Are you sensing a need to try something out of the ordinary? Hey, what about knitting or meditation, you may learn a lot! Count your nickels because something is coming up you will really have a craving for!

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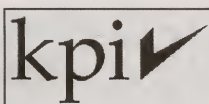
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Our next issue is all about Love. Does that make you angry? Tell us how you feel that Valentine's Day is a greeting card and floral service provider conspiracy to make everyone feel inadequate and miserable...or send us a free Love Personal. Whatever. Your choice.



# Full-time students:

**Are you satisfied with  
George Brown College?**



Think about it for a moment. What do you really think about your learning experience - Your program? Your teachers? Your campus? What about College services? Are you happy with what the college offers? Are you disappointed?

These are important questions that you will be asked in the second week of February. Someone will come to your class and give you a survey to complete. You will be asked to rate college programs, services and facilities. You don't have to be an expert, just a student with an honest opinion.

Your answers are very important. They will be used to improve the college so it can better meet your needs as well as the needs of future students. We will also ask graduates and employers what they think about the college. Using student feed back, George Brown has accomplished a great deal in a short time. In February, you can help by telling us what you think of the changes we have made and how we can continue to improve.

Sincerely,

  
**Student Association**  
OF GEORGE BROWN COLLEGE

Frank Sorochinsky  
President  
George Brown College

Margaret Cameron  
Acting President  
Student Association  
of George Brown College

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P.S. If you have any questions, or you don't get a survey call John Price at (416) 415-2543.